



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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BRAC panel to start drawing up its hit list today

Web Posted: 08/24/2005 12:00 AM CDT

Gary Martin
Express-News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission today begins finalizing Pentagon cost-savings proposals to close or revamp hundreds of U.S. military facilities.

Four of the installations targeted for closure are in Texas, including Brooks City-Base in San Antonio and Ingleside Naval Station on the Coastal Bend.

President Bush has indicated he'll accept the decision of the panel, commonly known as BRAC, leaving the independent panel as the last hope for hundreds of communities trying to spare their installations from the chopping block.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed; it is going to be tough, but I am not giving up," said Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi, who is fighting to save Ingleside, which has been targeted for closure.

Representatives from San Antonio, Texarkana, Killeen, Abilene, Corpus Christi and Houston are making the trek to the Washington suburb of Arlington, Va., where the three-day drama will unfold.

"A lot of them are already here," said Chris Paulitz, a spokesman for Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas. "We're keeping in touch with community folks and BRAC staff and making our case. We are continuing to do everything we can up until the last minute."

Over the next three days, the nine-member BRAC panel is scheduled to vote in daylong sessions on recommendations to close or realign 62 major military installations and 800 smaller facilities, generating savings projected at \$48.8 billion over the next 20 years.

In addition to Brooks and Ingleside, Red River Army Depot and the Lone Star Ammunition Plant, both in Texarkana, also are on the closure list.

The Pentagon also has recommendation realignments at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Ellington Field Air Guard Station in Houston, Dyess AFB in Abilene and Sheppard AFB in Wichita Falls.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has argued that the base closures are needed to eliminate Cold War facilities and transform the military into one that can meet the new challenges of terrorism.

The effort to cut crumbling and obsolete facilities is endorsed by government spending watchdogs, which called on the commission Tuesday to approve the Pentagon proposals.

"People may quibble with this or that element of the Pentagon's plan, but the fact remains that BRAC has a proven track record of achieving significant savings for taxpayers," said Tom Schatz with the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste.

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Base closure panels in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 endorsed 85 percent of Pentagon proposals.

Analysts expect no major surprises from the commission, which nevertheless has voiced skepticism about recommendations to close submarine facilities in the Northeast, reduce the number of Air National Guard facilities nationwide, and to keep open Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia, where encroachment on airspace presents an array of problems.

But the commission has said little publicly about Pentagon proposals for Texas.

"It seems that commission is accepting the fact that those changes need to be made," said Paul Taibl with Business Executives for National Security.

"Overall, Texas is kind of a net gainer. The politicians have made their rhetorical stance, and they will probably let it go at that," Taibl said.

Despite the closures and realignments recommended for Texas, the state would see a net gain of 6,150 military and civilian jobs under the Pentagon's proposals.

Army plans to move troops from Europe to Fort Bliss in El Paso would relocate 11,501 people and jobs to the state, and a Pentagon plan to consolidate enlisted medical training at Fort Sam Houston would bring 9,364 positions to San Antonio.

The gains at Fort Sam Houston would offset the loss of about 3,000 positions at Brooks, and the realignment at Lackland, which would take away about 3,100 jobs, according to the Pentagon proposal.

In South Texas, the biggest hit would be in the Coastal Bend with the closure of Ingleside and realignment of Corpus Christi Naval Air Station.

Local interest in transforming Ingleside into an industrial plant has undercut efforts with the commission to save the base, Ortiz said, as well as Navy pressure to relocate mine warfare assets to facilities on the East and West coasts.

"It's an uphill battle because the Navy is doing their push to do what they want, and the plan from the beginning was to close Ingleside," Ortiz said.

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Officers in AF may be facing ID theft

Web Posted: 08/24/2005 12:00 AM CDT

Amy Dorsett
Express-News Staff Writer

Sensitive information about more than 33,000 Air Force officers, about half of the service's entire officer corps, has been stolen from a San Antonio military database, officials said Tuesday.

The theft of the officers' personal information makes them prime targets for identity theft.

Air Force officials said an investigation has been launched, but they wouldn't comment about the probe's status, whether authorities had suspects in the case or where the hacking occurred.

The records theft took place in May and June, but Air Force officials issued letters last Friday to those whose information — including Social Security numbers, birthdates and other sensitive information — may have been stolen from the Air Force Personnel Center's online Assignment Management System.

The military acknowledged what they termed a security breach — they refused to admit their system was hacked. Commonly, unauthorized computer access is known as a hack.

The problem came to light after federal investigators noticed unusual activity on a single user's account in June.

Officials declined to comment on whether the user was civilian or military or whether that person is a suspect in the ongoing probe.

Except for 19 NCOs, all of the rest of the records belonged to officers, some stationed in the United States, others stationed at facilities around the world.

The Air Force Personnel Center is located at Randolph AFB and it tracks all of the branch's officers, with the exception of generals and colonels, according to Tech. Sgt. James Brabenec, a spokesman for the center. Those officers' data is stored at the Pentagon, he said.

The letter sent by Maj. Gen. Anthony Przybyslawski, commander of the Randolph center, said there had been a delay in notification so that law enforcement officials could better deal with the investigation.

"We notified airmen as quickly as we could while still following criminal investigation procedures with the (Air Force) Office of Special Investigations," Przybyslawski said in a statement. "Protecting airmen's personal information is something we take very seriously and we are doing everything we can to catch and prosecute those responsible."

As of Tuesday afternoon, no officers had reported their data had been fraudulently used, Brabenec said.

Once someone's identity is stolen, the time it takes to discover the crime will vary, according to Claudia Bourne Farrell, a spokeswoman for the Federal Trade Commission.

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Whoever is responsible for the Air Force hacking, she noted, likely hasn't had enough time to use all of the information they stole.

Because of the ongoing investigation, Brabenec declined to say if civilian law enforcement or intelligence agencies were involved in the investigation.

The Washington Post reported Tuesday that both civilian and military agencies were investigating the incident.

In addition to such critical identifying information as Social Security numbers and addresses, officers were told records illegally accessed include marital status, number of dependents, race, civilian educational degrees and major areas of study, school and year of graduation as well as duty information for overseas assignments or for sensitive units.

Once someone's personal information is stolen, it can be used for everything from obtaining credit for loans to getting a passport, according to Farrell.

While she didn't say she thought military personnel were more vulnerable to identity theft in general, she said those stationed abroad might be more at risk than other citizens.

"Military may be more vulnerable if they're deployed overseas because if consumers are the victim of identity theft, there are some steps they should take and take quickly," she said. "It may not be that simple for (those stationed overseas) to do."

"You could know the same day. Credit card companies are using more and more sophisticated algorithms," she said. "In other cases it could be a very protracted period of time."

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Keesler AFB, Miss.



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24 Aug 05/Sun Herald

BRAC commission begins deliberations today

By KATE R. HOULIHAN
SUN HERALD WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON - Naval Station Pascagoula and Keesler Air Force base will learn their fate later this week when the Base Realignment and Closure commission holes up in an Arlington, Va., hotel to make decisions.

Deliberations will start this morning and are scheduled to last late into the evening, with a similar pattern Thursday through Saturday. Navy and Air Force considerations come third and fourth, respectively. Commissioners will ask final questions, deliberate and then vote on each base.

Robert McCreary, deputy director of communications for BRAC, said there is no way to know exactly when Pascagoula and Keesler will be up for discussion, although he speculated Navy action could be completed today.

"It just depends on how quickly the commissioners move along," McCreary said.

In a statement released with the hearing schedule, commission Chairman Anthony Principi said: "The process has not been easy. Much thought and careful consideration is going into each one of these decisions and we appreciate and have taken into account the input provided us by many members of the communities potentially affected by these recommendations."

The decision to realign Keesler Air Force Base has come under scrutiny, especially after it was revealed earlier this summer that a numerical error gave the base a lower score.

"I can tell you that no decisions have been made yet," McCreary said in reference to whether Keesler might be taken off the realignment list.

Rep. Gene Taylor, Bay St. Louis Democrat, said in light of the errors, it just makes sense to take it off the list.

"We think if they're doing their job... they will take Keesler off the list," Taylor said, adding that community leaders have done a good job making their case for removing both installations from the list. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., praised the BRAC commission for its "impressive degree of competence and diligence" and its quest to seek out information to help them make their decisions.

"I hope they find a way to keep Mississippi in the forefront of our national security effort," he said. "I think we have been generous and helpful to the military as the host state for these important military facilities and I hope they can find a way to continue to take advantage of Mississippi hospitality for our military forces."



AETC News Clips

Luke AFB, Ariz.



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Jet noise hurts students' hearing

To the editor:

I have been wondering why you aren't telling the people about Heritage Elementary School and the children there might lose their hearing.

Here is the paper that says the children could lose their hearing and parents are to be warned. The jet noise is too loud and most likely exceeds the safe level of decibels on an overcast day. No one is warned that I know of. My grandson attended there last year and my son who is in the Air Force finally took him out.

I don't want my grandson to lose his hearing and it probably could have happened if someone wouldn't have given me this paper. The school is keeping it a secret from us.

I can't just sit here and watch those children go to a school at a place that might not be good for them.

We got advertisements from Heritage and found that they are also starting another school off of Glendale and near El Mirage Road but it is behind the Coyote Sports Bar! What kind of terrible planning is that?

I went to the bar and they advertise girls who wear almost nothing with their whole rear end exposed and most of the breasts too for outside sports. They are basically naked. There is loud vulgar rap music playing loud. I called my congressman and he said it was illegal for the school to be there.

Shouldn't your newspaper make the parents aware of this possibly dangerous situation for their children?

Robert Linderman
Litchfield Park

The Arizona Republic

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Panel to decide whether Air Force Lab will stay in Mesa

By Billy House
REPUBLIC WASHINGTON
BUREAU

WASHINGTON — A commission of former military officials, lawmakers and presidential Cabinet members will decide this week whether the Air Force Research Laboratory in Mesa should be kept in Arizona.

The nine-member panel appointed by President Bush to review the Pentagon's massive plan to close dozens of bases and consolidate hundreds of other military installations will spend several days beginning Wednesday voting in public on

which of those proposals to accept or reject.

One of the Pentagon's recommendations is to relocate the Air Force Research Lab in Mesa to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, where it would be consolidated with other labs.

State officials previously have said the annual economic impact of the lab to Arizona is about \$74 million, and that there is a possibility that as many as 465 jobs may be lost, 237 belonging to the lab and 228 that are tied to the lab indirectly.

Gov. Janet Napolitano, in a

letter to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission Chairman Anthony Principi, argued that it is "in the best interests" of the Defense Department, the state and local communities to keep the lab in Mesa.

Napolitano said in her Aug. 12 letter to Principi that the costs to the Pentagon of relocating the lab, according to state estimates, could be in excess of \$50 million. Earlier estimates had put the figure at \$30 million.

More important, Napolitano wrote, relocation will mean a drain of "intellectual capital"

that would cripple the lab's military value. She said an informal survey indicates 80 percent of the lab's employees will not relocate.

The lab also has been depicted as part of Mesa's plans for redevelopment, which include a university and research park in place of Williams Air Force Base, which was closed in a base-closure round in 1991.

Napolitano argued that maintaining or even enhancing the research relationships between the Air Force lab with Arizona State University and private contractors at Williams makes better sense and carries

even greater military value for the future.

The commission must present its final list of recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president can approve it on an all-or-nothing basis or send it back once for revisions before forwarding it to Congress. Congress has 45 days after getting it from the White House to pass a joint resolution rejecting the recommendations. If lawmakers do not act, they become binding.

Along with the proposed relocation of the lab in Mesa to Ohio, the Pentagon also called for several less-dramatic hits

on Arizona.

Those include the loss of 278 military and civilian jobs tied to Luke Air Force Base. There also could be a loss of 274 contractor jobs or other jobs in the Valley tied to the base.

The Pentagon also proposes cutting 168 civilian jobs at Fort Huachuca, in Sierra Vista.

And the 1st Lt. Paul K. Allen Armed Forces Reserve Center in Tucson could be closed and relocated to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center and maintenance facility at the Arizona Army National Guard Silverbell Army Heliport at Pinal Air Park in Marana.

The Arizona Republic

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Vance AFB, Okla.



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August 23, 2005

Since 1995, Enid has spent more than \$3.8 million protecting Vance AFB

Enid News and Eagle

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CNHI News Service

— By Robert Barron Staff Writer

During the past decade, the city of Enid has spent nearly \$4 million to protect Vance Air Force Base.

When Vance was not on the Department of Defense's proposed closure list, which was announced May 13, many people in Enid probably consider the money well spent.

Since 1995, when Vance was added to the list and eventually removed, the city has spent \$3,869,197 in preservation efforts.

That money has kept Vance, the top economic force in northwest Oklahoma, solid, said Mike Cooper, a member of the Partners in the Sky campaign and the point man for Vance Development Authority.

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission will vote on its final recommendations this week. That list will go to President Bush by Sept. 8, and Congress will finalize it in October. Unless something unforeseen occurs, Vance will grow, Cooper said.

Not only did Vance survive the closure process this year, it was on the Defense Department list to add another 99 military and civilian jobs.

This year alone, Cooper said he has spent 70 percent of his time in Washington, D.C.

"Thanks to SBC Southwest-ern Bell for letting me do that. They knew I had the contacts and the knowledge needed to do it, and they let me do it," he said.

Cooper said when Vance was added to the review list in 1995 there were many questions about what would happen. As mayor then, Cooper knew Enid could not afford to lose the base.

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Coming on the heels of the Champlin refinery closing and the oil bust period, Cooper said he wanted to maintain Vance permanently.

"If we had taken that hit we would have been a long time recovering," he said. "It was something we had to do. It was like a line in the sand."

Most of the funds the city has spent on Vance were spent through Vance Development Authority, a group of Enid leaders whose aim is to preserve and grow the base.

The bulk of the money Enid has spent has been spent for professional services, including a lobbyist who represented the city on BRAC issues. Other expenditures have been for contractual services, subscriptions to various government publications, travel and organizational dues.

Funds also were spent for housing contracts for homes reserved for military personnel through the VDA, scholarships, other housing programs and a noise attenuation program for homes in the Vance area with extremely high levels of noise. The Vance Scholarship Pro-gram was copied by the Air Force, which began offering college scholarships to members.

Part of the equation also involved a school bond and sales tax package totaling \$32 million. In addition, the city has spent \$1.82 million on improving Southgate to handle more traffic when the gates of the base are moved farther north. The gates to the base are being moved as part of an effort to increase security.

Also, VDA and Enid leaders were active with Oklahoma's congressional representatives to increase the amount of military construction funding at the base. A list of needs from the 1995 round was used as the example, and the base has brought in more than \$100 million in construction projects since 1995, Cooper said.

The city also purchased and donated 313 acres to the base, beginning in 1994 and concluding in 2004.

In 1994, the city paid \$316,892 for the 160-acre Baker tract, and \$31,755 for the 12-acre Kisner property.

The next year, the city purchased the nine-acre Andrews property for \$10,500. In 2004, the city paid \$130,000 for the 33-acre Semrad property and bought 100 acres from Bowyer for \$350,000.

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The single-most important aspect of the process was showing the military Enid, the state and Oklahoma's congressional delegation all have a good relationship with Vance, Cooper said. Enid's success was proven when Undersecretary of De-fense Phil Gronney said every community should act like Enid and assist with base needs, Cooper said.

"Everybody ought to feel good about what we've done. We've spent a lot of money, but what a small price to pay to permanently protect Vance's mission here," he said.